

Educator Guide

to Accessibility within the STAAR Program

2018 Calendar Year

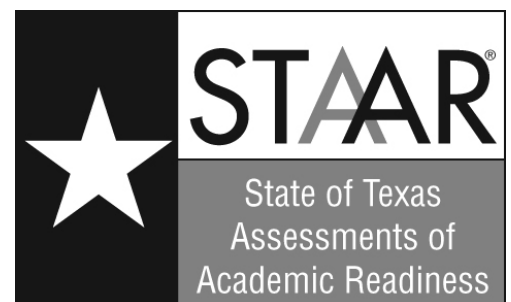


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Resources

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| Online Resource Materials | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Resource materials available online | Located at |
| Accommodation Resources | http://tea.texas.gov/Student_Testing_and_Accountability/Testing/Student_Assessment_Overview/Accommodation_Resources/2018_Accessibility/ |
| Coordinator Manual Resources | http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/manuals/dccm/ |
| LPAC Resources | http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ell/lpac/ |
| online testing technology | http://TexasAssessment.com/administrators/technology/ |
| STAAR Released Test Questions | http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/STAAR_Released_Test_Questions/ |
| STAAR Resources | http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/ |
| Student Assessment Division | http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ |

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Accommodation
Resources

Purpose of This Guide

This guide is provided to familiarize educators with features and supports that make the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) accessible to all students. General information outlining the updated accommodation policy is available in this guide. In addition, specific examples of the online features and supports offered on STAAR are provided. All information in this guide, as well as additional resources about accessibility on STAAR, can be accessed online through the link in the NOTES column on this page.

Icons

The icon shown below is used throughout the guide. This icon is located in the NOTES column.



This icon indicates additional information that is available online. The text located below the icon links to specific online resources.



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Understanding STAAR Accessibility

The goal of STAAR accessibility is to ensure that each student can interact appropriately with the content, presentation, and response modes of the state assessment. In order to meet this goal, the STAAR accessibility features and designated supports are designed to allow all test takers to demonstrate their knowledge of the content being tested without the format of the assessment, the non-tested language, or the type of response needed to answer the questions being barriers. The various features and designated supports made available on STAAR paper and online tests are also designed to be the same or similar to those accommodations commonly used during classroom instruction.

STAAR is available on paper and online as indicated for the grades and subjects listed below.

| Program | Grade | Subject | Paper Available | Online Available |
|-------------------|-------|---------|-----------------|------------------|
| STAAR | 3–EOC | all | √ | √ |
| STAAR Spanish | 3–5 | all | √ | |
| STAAR Alternate 2 | 3–EOC | all | √ | |

Accessibility within the STAAR Program

For STAAR and STAAR Spanish, accessibility falls into three categories: accessibility features, locally approved designated supports, and designated supports requiring TEA approval. It is important to refer to the individual policy documents on the Accommodation Resources website for comprehensive information about the procedures and materials within each of these categories.

Accessibility Features

Accessibility features may be provided to students based on their needs. In general, these procedures and materials are available to any student who regularly benefits from their use during instruction; however, a student cannot be required to use them during testing. Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that test administrators understand the proper implementation of these procedures and use of these materials. In some cases, a student may need to complete the test in a separate setting in order to eliminate distractions to other students and to ensure that the security and confidentiality of the test are maintained.

Locally Approved Designated Supports

Locally approved designated supports include accommodations that may be made available to students who meet eligibility criteria. The appropriate team of people at the campus level determines eligibility as indicated in each policy document. The decision to use a designated support during a state assessment should be made on an individual student basis and take into consideration the needs of the student and whether the student routinely receives the support during classroom instruction and classroom

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testing. This does not mean that the support must be used every day during instruction. Routine accommodation, or designated support use, as defined by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), means that the student has used the support often enough during classroom instruction and testing that he or she is able to use it independently during the state assessment. (Independent use is applicable to some designated supports [e.g., calculation aids] but not to others [e.g., oral administration].) In addition, the support has been proven to be effective in meeting the student's specific needs, as evidenced by student scores or teacher observations with and without support use.

Designated Supports Requiring TEA Approval

These designated supports require the submission of an Accommodation Request Form to TEA. The appropriate team of people at the campus level as indicated in each policy document determines whether the student meets all of the specific eligibility criteria and, if so, submits an Accommodation Request Form to TEA. Accommodation Request Forms must be received by TEA according to the posted deadlines. Late requests will **NOT** be processed unless circumstances involving the student change after the deadline (e.g., newly enrolled student, medical emergency, updated admission, review, and dismissal [ARD] committee decisions). The request must be approved by TEA before a student can use the designated support on the state assessment. This type of support must be documented in the student's paperwork as "pending TEA approval." In the event that a request is denied, the campus should be prepared to meet the student's needs with accessibility features or any of the locally approved designated supports.

These features and supports are intended to make STAAR accessible to students for a variety of reasons. A student may take STAAR online for one subject and on paper for another, depending on appropriateness and/or accessibility. Accessibility features, locally approved designated supports, and designated supports requiring TEA approval are available on paper and online as indicated on the next page. It is important to refer to the individual policy documents on the Accommodation Resources webpage for the applicable grade levels, subjects, and eligibility criteria.



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| | Paper | Online |
|--|-------|--------|
| Accessibility Features | | |
| Amplification Devices | √ | √ |
| Bilingual Dictionary | √ | √ |
| Color Overlay/Color Setting | √ | √* |
| General Reminders to Stay on Task | √ | √ |
| Highlighter, Colored Pencil, etc. | √ | √* |
| Individual Administration | √ | √ |
| Magnifying Devices/Zoom | √ | √* |
| Minimize Distractions (e.g., stress ball, headphones, music) | √ | √ |
| Photocopying or Enlarging Non-secure Test Materials | √ | |
| Place Marker/Guideline | √ | √* |
| Projection Devices | √ | √ |
| Read Aloud Writing Prompt to Student | √ | √ |
| Read Test Aloud to Self | √ | √ |
| Scratch Paper/Notes Tool/Sticky Notes | √ | √* |
| Signing Test Directions | √ | √ |
| Small Group | √ | √ |
| Third Grade Math Reading Assistance | √ | √ |
| Translating Test Directions | √ | √ |
| Designated Supports | | |
| Basic Transcribing | √ | √ |
| Braille | √ | |
| Calculation Aids | √ | √ |
| Content and Language Supports | | √* |
| Extra Time | √ | √ |
| Individualized Structured Reminders | √ | √ |
| Large Print | √ | |
| Manipulating Test Materials | √ | √ |
| Math Manipulatives | √ | √ |
| Oral/Signed Administration/Text-to-Speech | √ | √* |
| Spelling Assistance | √ | √* |
| Supplemental Aids | √ | √ |
| Designated Supports Requiring TEA Approval | | |
| Complex Transcribing | √ | √ |
| Extra Day | √ | √ |
| Math Scribe | √ | √ |
| Other | √ | √ |

* These features and supports are embedded within the online system. All other accommodations are administered independent of the online system.

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Accommodation
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Considering Paper Versus Online

In addition to making decisions based upon individual need, due consideration should be given to the mode in which an allowed or approved designated support is offered. Designated supports may require a student to take STAAR in a certain mode. For instance, if a student requires a braille assessment, then a paper form must be used since an online assessment is not provided in braille. A student eligible for content and language supports must take STAAR online, as these are embedded online supports. On the other hand, decisions about supplemental aid eligibility can be based solely on individual need since this support is provided locally and is not part of the assessment mode. Eligibility for some designated supports will have to be established by the appropriate campus-level committee before they can be activated in the online system.

The following sections highlight those accessibility features and designated supports provided in the online system. For information about the remaining features and supports, see the appropriate policy documents located on the Accommodation Resources webpage.

Online Accessibility Features

Accessibility features are available to all students taking STAAR on paper or online. Some of these features are embedded in the online system, while others (e.g., individual administration, general reminders to stay on task) are not. The following figures describe the accessibility features embedded in the online system and provide their associated icon.

Figure 1. Zoom

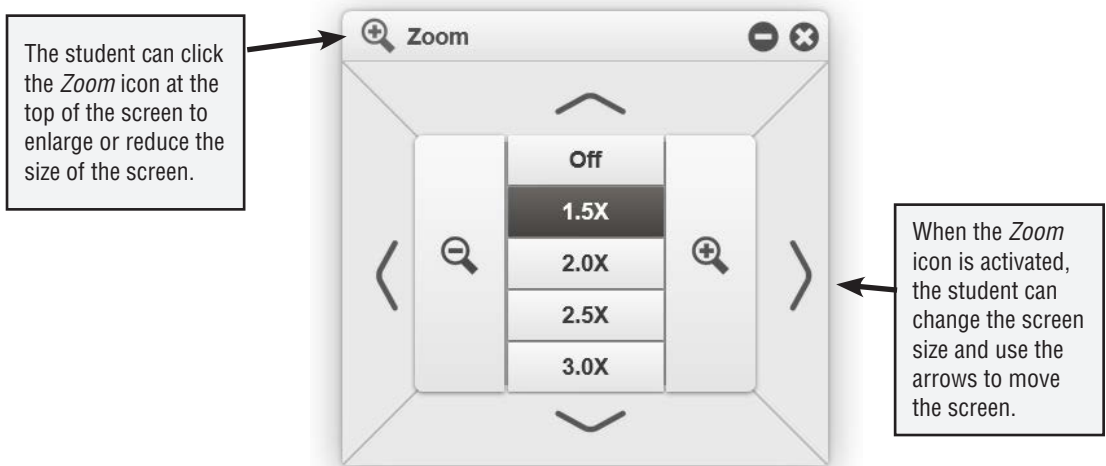


Figure 2. Color

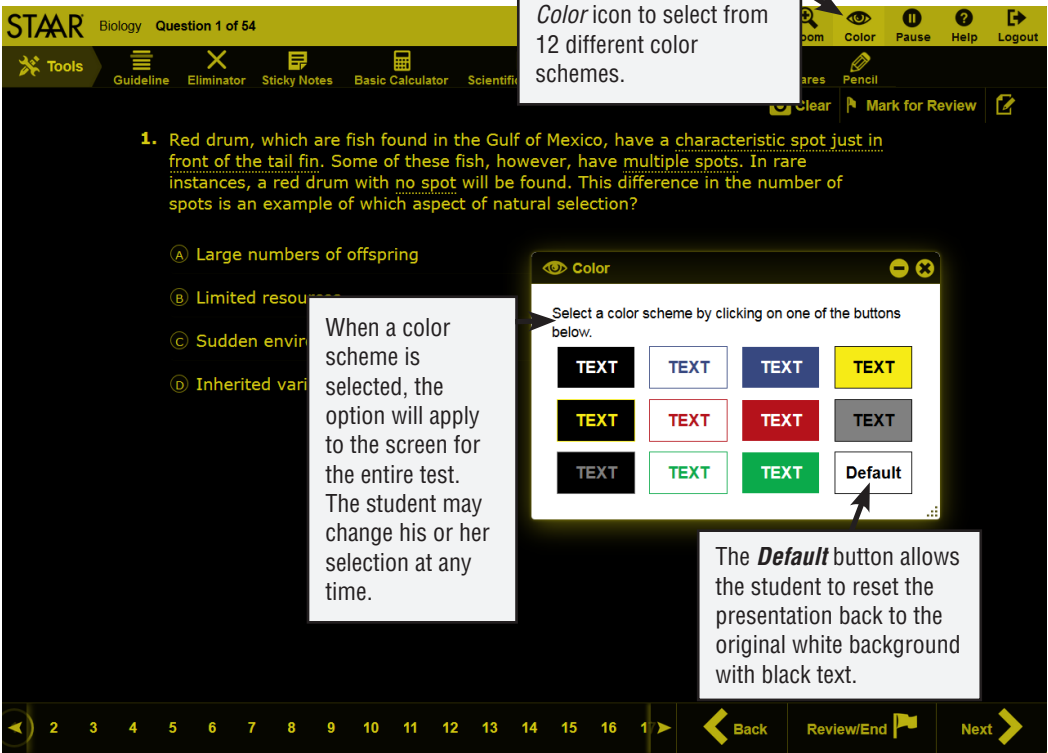
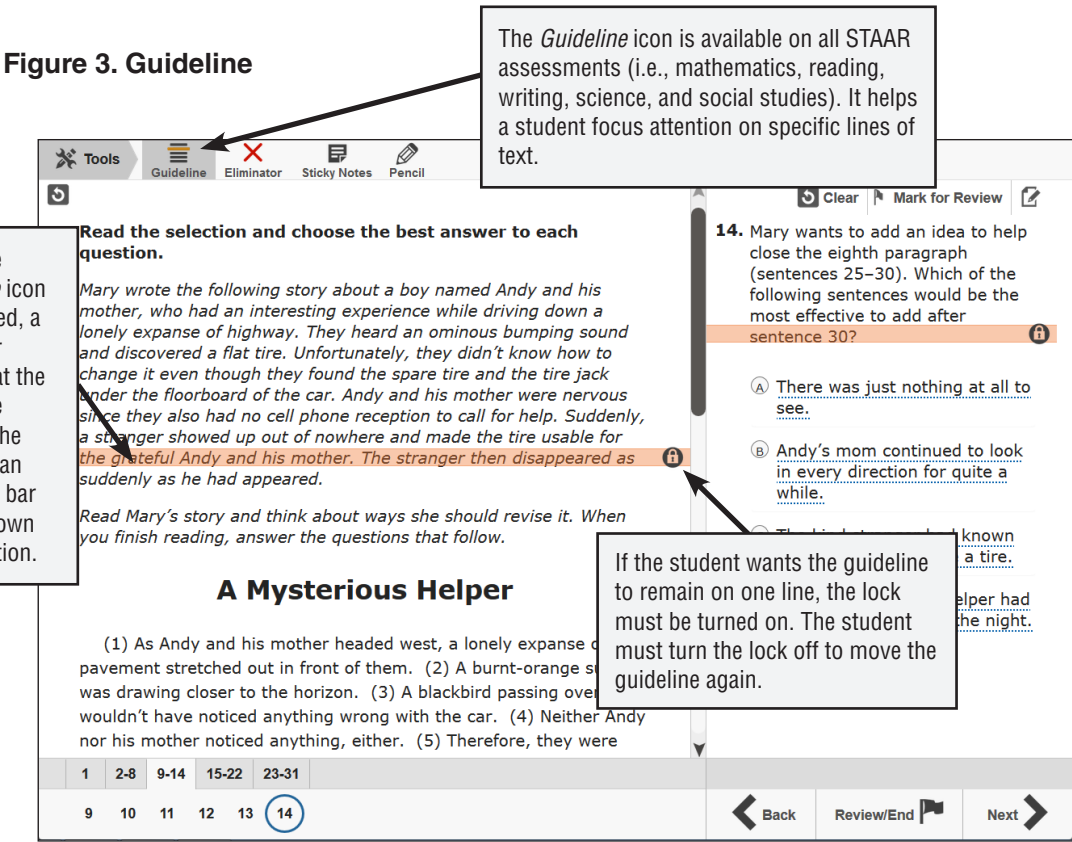


Figure 3. Guideline



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Figure 4. Highlight

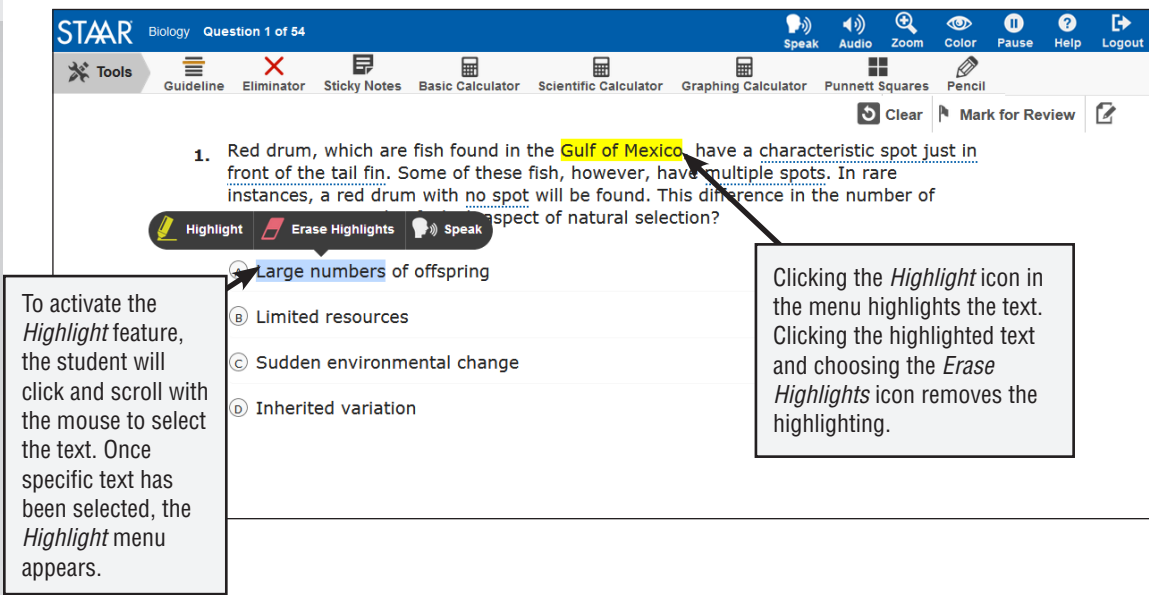


Figure 5. Pencil

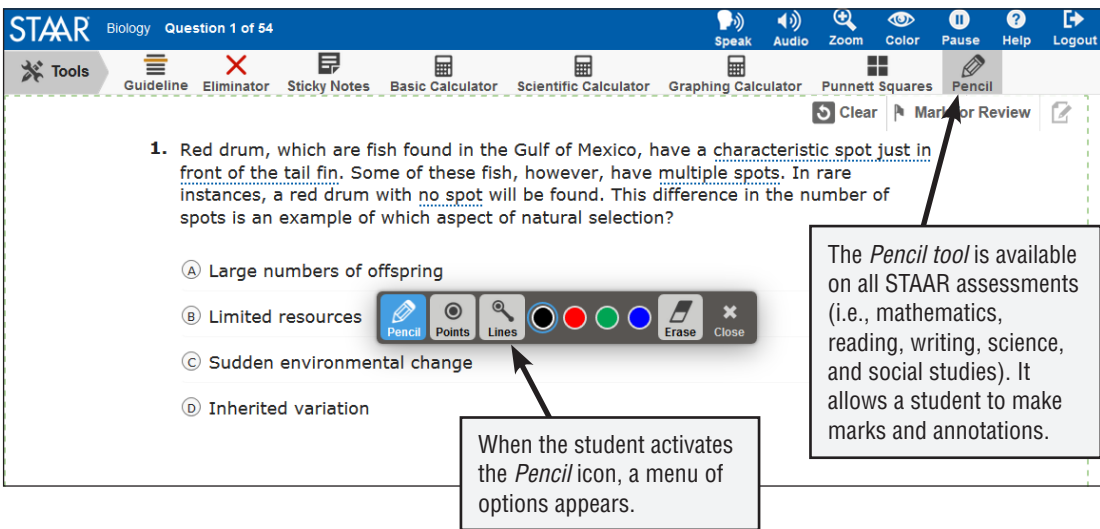
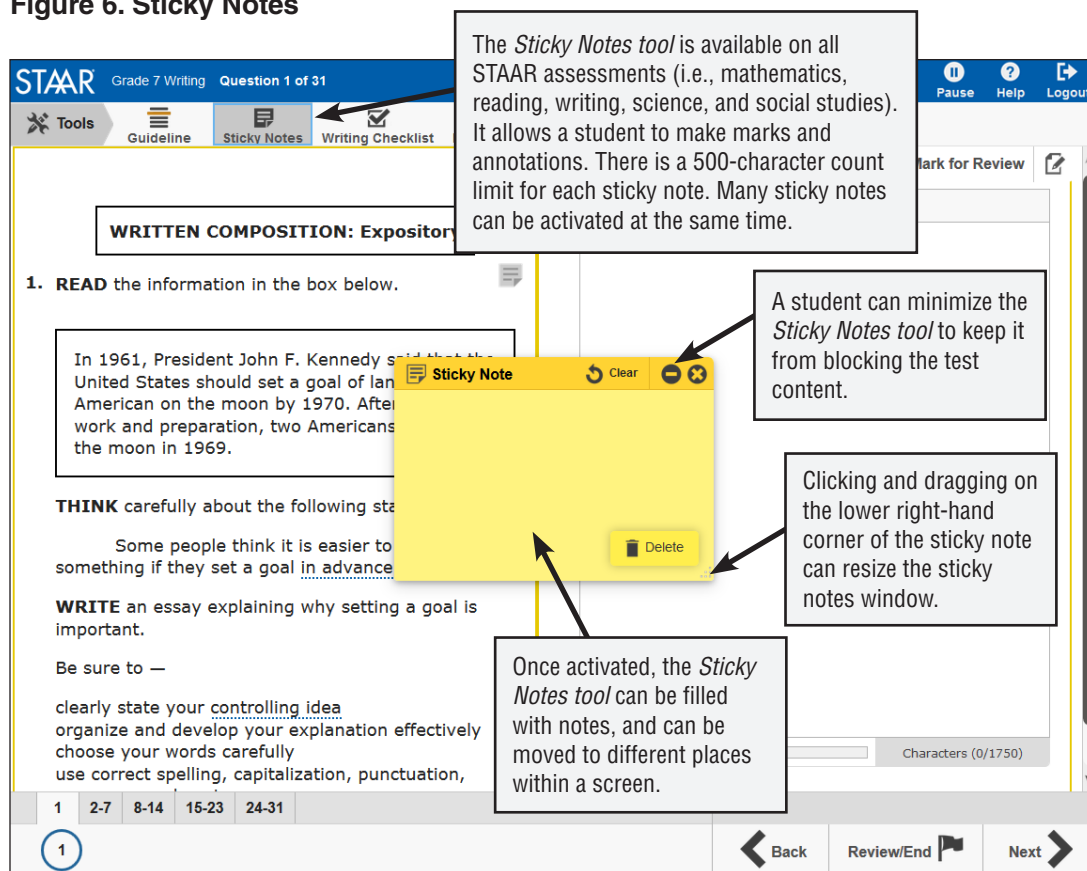


Figure 6. Sticky Notes



Online Designated Supports

Designated supports are available to students who meet the eligibility criteria as determined and documented by the appropriate team of people at the local level. Some of these supports are embedded in the online system, while others are not. More specific information can be found in the individual policy documents on the Accommodation Resources webpage.

Supports not embedded in the online system may be made available to students testing online as well as to those testing on paper. The test administrator will provide the support to the student on the day of the test. For instance, a student needing supplemental aids will need to use the type of assistance he or she uses in the classroom (e.g., grade-appropriate grammar and mechanics rules, mnemonic devices), as supplemental aids are not embedded into the online system.

Some designated supports that are available to students taking a paper test are also embedded online accommodations. For instance, a student needing reading support can receive an oral administration of the paper test booklet from the test administrator or can take the test online using text-to-speech.



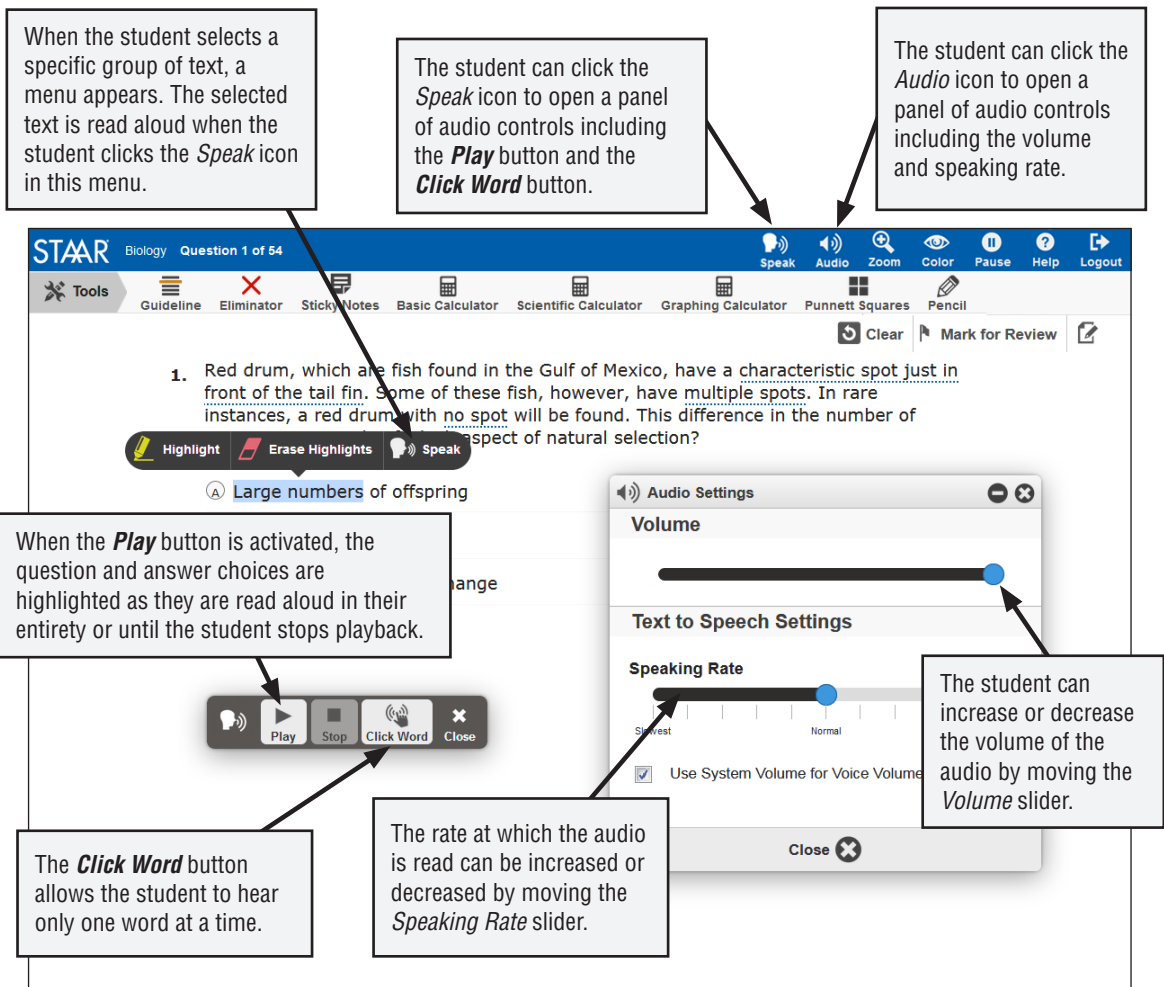
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Content and language supports are available only as embedded online accommodations. In order to receive these supports, a student must test online. The delivery of an online assessment offers an opportunity to provide these types of supports in a standardized way to students who use similar accommodations in the classroom and find this type of assessment to be the most appropriate and accessible for them. Content and language supports have accommodations in the form of pop-ups, rollovers, supplementary materials, and prereading text. These supports are only applied to particular selections and test questions based on expert judgments about which supports are likely to make a question more accessible to students.

The following figures describe only those designated supports embedded in the online testing system.

Figure 7. Text-to-speech



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Figure 8. Pop-ups

STAAR U.S. History Question 1 of 68

Tools: Guideline, Eliminator, Sticky Notes, Pencil

1. The Puritans founded the Massachusetts Bay Colony to escape persecution.

When a pop-up is clicked, a window appears above or below the dotted underline or dotted box. Clicking the "X" closes the Pop-up window.

Roger Williams was banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony and formed a new colony that did not have a state church.

Anne Hutchinson was expelled from the Massachusetts Bay Colony for dissenting against church doctrine.

approval in colonial America that are related to —

A the eventual adoption of the U.S. Constitution

B the formation of a government controlled by religious officials

For students who have text-to-speech as an embedded support, the *Speak* icon will appear in all pop-ups. The student can click the *Speak* icon to hear the text in the pop-up read aloud. (Note: text-to-speech may not be able to read aloud some text, such as labels, that render as art.)

5 Back Review/End Next

Figure 9. Rollovers

STAAR Grade 3 Mathematics Question 1 of 3

Tools: Guideline, Sticky Notes, Conversions, Customary Ruler, Metric Ruler, Graph Paper, Pencil

1. Gilbert had a total of 85 CDs to put in stacks. He put 27 CDs in one stack and 39 CDs in a second stack. How many CDs did Gilbert have left to put in stacks?

Record your answer. Be sure to use the correct place value.

□ □ □ .

Clicking the *Rollover* icon when the small arrow is pointing towards words or phrases opens a rollover.

Clear Mark for Review

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Figure 10. Rollovers

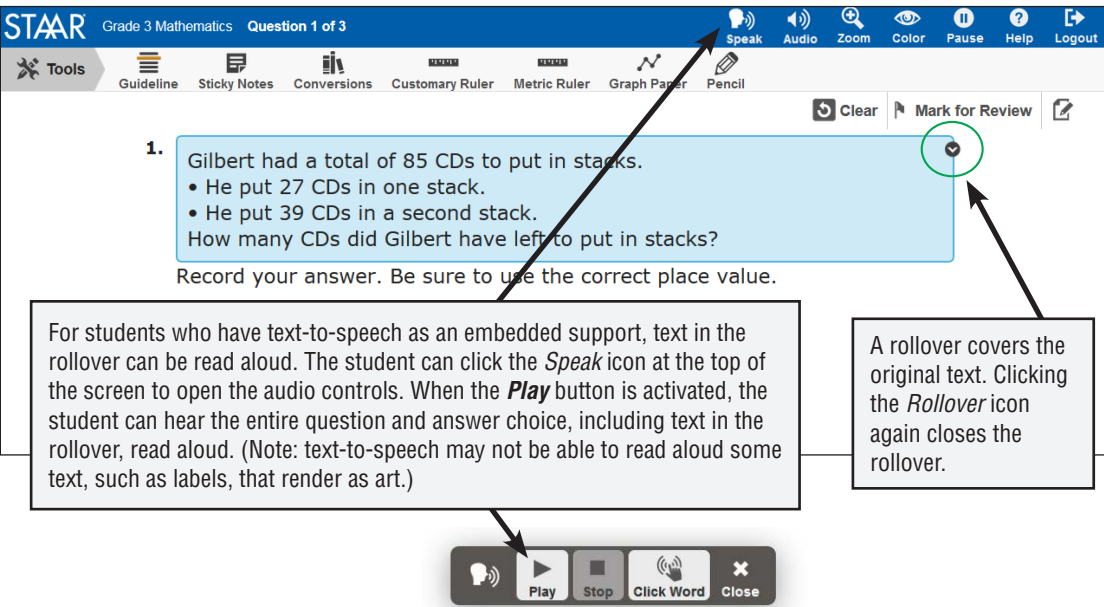


Figure 11. Additional Supports

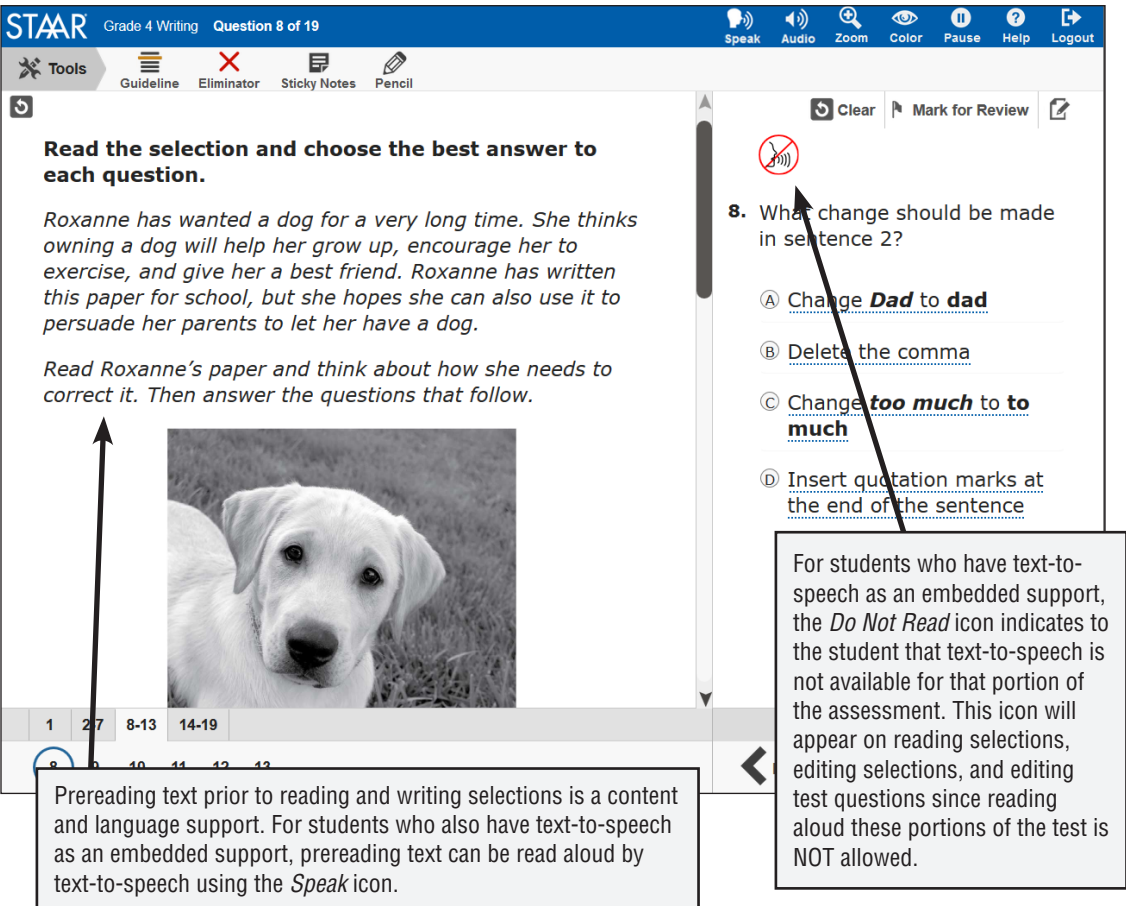


Figure 12. Spelling Assistance and Supplementary Materials

The screenshot displays the STAAR Grade 7 Writing interface. At the top, a blue header bar contains the STAAR logo, 'Grade 7 Writing', and 'Question 1 of 31'. Below this is a toolbar with icons for Tools, Guideline, Sticky Notes, Writing Checklist, and Pencil. A callout box points to the Writing Checklist icon, stating: 'Supplementary materials are content and language supports. The student can click on the icon for the writing checklist and use as needed. Punnett Squares are available for the biology test.'

The main content area is titled 'WRITTEN COMPOSITION: Expository'. It includes a task instruction: '1. READ the information in the box below.' Below this is a text box containing a paragraph about President John F. Kennedy's goal of landing an American on the moon by 1970. Following the text box is a 'THINK' section with a statement: 'Some people think it is easier to accomplish something if they set a goal in advance.' Below this is a 'WRITE' section with an instruction: 'WRITE an essay explaining why setting a goal is important.' and a prompt: 'Be sure to — clearly state your controlling idea, organize and develop your explanation effectively, choose your words carefully, use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation,'.

The writing area shows the text: 'It is easier to a acomplish a goal in advance because'. A callout box points to the underlined word 'acomplish', stating: 'For students who are eligible for spelling assistance as an embedded support, a red underline will show below words that are misspelled within the open response entry section. The student can click the underlined word to see suggestions for replacements.' Another callout box points to the 'Suggestions' dropdown menu, which shows 'accomplish' as a suggestion, stating: 'Clicking on the suggested words will replace the misspelled word.'

At the bottom of the interface is a navigation bar with a progress indicator showing '1' out of 31 questions, and buttons for 'Back', 'Review/End', and 'Next'. A character count 'Characters (43/1750)' is also visible.

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Accommodation Guidelines

The Accommodation Guidelines specify how STAAR selections and test questions are accommodated for content and language supports. Accommodation is done in a standardized manner while maintaining the integrity of the knowledge and skills being assessed.

Content and Language Supports

These designated supports, mainly in the form of pop-ups, rollovers, prereading text, and supplementary materials, are available on STAAR online tests only (They are not available for Algebra II or English III).

Pop-ups:

- isolate specific information in a question that corresponds to each answer choice
- isolate specific text or information in a selection that is referenced in the question or answer choices
- isolate specific information in a graphic or list that is referenced in the question
- define literary terms
- apply an allowable supplemental aid (e.g., graphic organizer, place-value chart, t-chart, graphic of scientific concept, timeline, map) to specific questions or answer choices
- include the formula from the grade-specific Reference Materials when the question specifies the measure or conversion to be performed
- direct student attention to parts of the grade-specific Reference Materials
- provide clarifying information for a graphic organizer, political cartoon, or map
- provide a visual representation in the selection, question, answer choices, or in the writing prompt by adding graphics, photographs, or animations
- define or clarify construct-irrelevant words, phrases, and sentences using plain language, synonyms, definitions, examples, and consistent language

Rollovers:

- bullet or separate steps in a process (e.g., multi-step problem, sequence of events)
- reword complex questions or answer choices to condense text
- reorganize and simplify historical excerpts

Pre-reads:

- offer text prior to the selection (for grades 3–8 reading, grades 4 and 7 writing, English I, and English II only)

Supplementary Materials:

- blank Punnett squares (biology only)
- writing checklists (for grades 4 and 7 writing, English I, and English II only)

Classroom Accommodations and the Link to Content and Language Supports

The use of accommodations occurs primarily during classroom instruction as educators use various instructional strategies to meet the individual needs of each student, thus allowing each student to maximize his or her academic potential. Content and language supports available online on STAAR offer new opportunities for students to meaningfully access the required state assessment.

TEA policies indicate that decisions about designated supports used during a statewide assessment should

- be made on an individual basis,
- consider the needs of the student, and
- be routinely used during classroom instruction and testing.

Although it is unlikely that students will routinely use the computer-based content and language supports during classroom instruction, they may use variations of them as illustrated in the table on the next page. This list is not exhaustive; it includes examples of classroom accommodations that may correspond to the embedded online content and language supports on STAAR.

Educators, parents, and students must understand that accommodations provided during classroom instruction and testing might differ from designated supports allowed for use on state assessments. Instruction comes first and can be customized to meet the needs of each student. Unlike instruction, state assessments are standardized to provide a reliable comparison of outcomes across all test takers. Certain accommodations used in the classroom would invalidate the content being assessed or compromise the security and integrity of the state assessment. For this reason, not all accommodations suitable for instruction are allowed during the state assessments. However, the policies for accessibility on state assessments do not limit an educator's ability to develop individualized materials and techniques to facilitate student learning.

In order to make accommodation decisions for students, educators should have knowledge of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and how a student performs in relation to them. Educators should also collect and analyze data pertaining to the use and effectiveness of accommodations (e.g., assignment/test scores with and without the accommodation, observational reports) so that informed educational decisions can be made for each student. By analyzing data, an educator can determine whether the accommodation becomes inappropriate or unnecessary over time due to the student's age or changing needs. Likewise, data can confirm for the educator that the student still struggles in certain areas and should continue to use the accommodation.

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| Classroom Accommodations Examples that Link to STAAR Content and Language Supports |
|--|
| The teacher introduces a new book to a struggling reader prior to reading it aloud or independent reading. The topics discussed might include major concepts, difficult words, setting, characters, or prior knowledge of the subject. |
| Using a dictionary or thesaurus, the teacher points out the meaning or synonym of a word. |
| The teacher isolates specific information to focus the student on the core concept being taught. |
| The teacher acts out or has the students role-play newly introduced vocabulary or difficult concepts. |
| The teacher simplifies difficult vocabulary and then reformats complex word problems by bulleting or spacing out each step required to solve the problem. |
| The teacher provides the student with a specific supplemental aid (e.g., chart, table, graph, checklist, map, timeline) applicable to the question being posed, the assignment, or the task. |
| The teacher provides the formula(s) that is needed to solve a problem. |
| The teacher provides visual aids (e.g., demonstrations, photographs, art) to identify people and/or places. |
| The teacher provides visual aids (e.g., demonstrations, photographs, art) to define or clarify vocabulary. |
| During classroom discussions, the teacher clarifies or rewords complex text or questions using simpler language. |
| The teacher directs the student (e.g., highlight, bold, point to, flag the information) to the specific part(s) of the selection, diagram, map, or figure that is being discussed. |
| The teacher presents parts of a complex concept one at a time. |



Coordinator Manual
Resources

Accommodation
Resources

STAAR
Assessment
Management
System

Special Situations for Content and Language Supports

Because content and language supports are embedded accommodations presented in an online format, replicating these features in a paper or braille version is not always possible. Technology-based supports enable most students to test online; however, in instances in which the use of a support is not feasible or appropriate, or if the administration of an online test is inappropriate due to a student's particular disability, a special request may be made to TEA for approval to administer a paper test booklet. The paper administration request document can be found on the TEA's Coordinator Manual Resources webpage.

For students who are eligible for content and language supports and take the braille version of STAAR, the test administrator will use the paper version of STAAR with Embedded Supports and associated administration guide to provide these supports. In addition, the test administrator must have the new Specific Braille Instructions for Content and Language Supports document available in the STAAR Assessment Management System. This document will provide the following information: picture descriptions of content and language support images from the administration guide and graphics (e.g., charts, tables, graphs) that may be reproduced for accessibility (e.g., brailleing graphics, pairing graphics with tactile symbols, texts, or objects, enlarging or projecting). The Specific Braille Instructions for Content and Language Supports document is not meant to replace any STAAR administration materials, but must be used in conjunction with the appropriate specific braille instructions for the test being administered.

For students who are visually impaired and approved to take the paper version of STAAR with Embedded Supports, the test administrator may also use the Specific Braille Instructions for Content and Language Supports document available in the Assessment Management System if the student cannot appropriately access the images in the administration guide.

Deaf or hard-of-hearing students eligible for oral administration and content and language supports need to take STAAR online to access these embedded supports. However, since these students are unable to access the text-to-speech function, a signed administration is allowed for those parts of the test that can be read aloud. Test administrators should be trained using the Oral/Signed Administration Guidelines and also read the specific guidelines for signing test content included in the General Instructions for Administering State Assessments to Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing document. Both of these documents are located on the TEA's Accommodation Resources webpage. In addition, proctor codes will be available to district testing coordinators in the Assessment Management System to download and distribute to test administrators providing a signed administration of an online STAAR test.

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STAAR
Released Tests

Online Testing
Technology

Planning for Testing

Careful review of the state accessibility policy is required so that students receive only those accessibility features and designated supports that are allowed or approved by TEA for use on state assessments. Testing coordinators, test administrators, and other campus personnel involved in state testing must consider the following questions related to ensuring accessibility for students on test day.

- Which students receive accessibility features or designated supports on test day?
- What special arrangements need to be considered for students who will use accessibility features and designated supports on test day? For example, ensuring that calculators and other equipment have sufficient batteries or choosing separate settings for students who use certain supports requires advance planning.
- What staff training is needed to properly provide certain designated supports? For instance, transcribing a student's response onto an answer document or providing an oral administration requires advance training.
- What campus and district procedures are in place to ensure test security, especially if the student is using technology as a support? Please refer to the Technology Guidelines document found on the Accommodation Resources webpage.
- What procedure is in place and who is responsible for recording designated supports on the answer document or in the Assessment Management System for online tests?
- Have students taking STAAR online had the opportunity to practice interacting with the tools and features in the online testing system? It is important that students have used the online tutorials and released tests to become familiar with selecting answers, using the online tools, moving through the test, submitting the test, etc.
- What special arrangements need to be considered for students taking different versions of STAAR with different designated supports? For example, should students taking STAAR online without designated supports be grouped with students taking STAAR online with designated supports? Should students taking STAAR on paper and STAAR online be grouped together?
- Are computers prepared for online testing according to the *STAAR Online Testing Platform Technology Guide* available online at www.TexasAssessment.com/technology/?

For additional information, contact the TEA's Student Assessment Division at 512-463-9536 or assessment.specialpopulations@tea.texas.gov.